1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12) 1928 NN11 Creek NN11

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL USAGES OF THE INDIANS OF THE CREEK CONFEDERACY

By JOHN R. SWANTON

INTRODUCTION

114 [121] In Bulletin 73[1] I reviewed the history of the Indian tribes which constituted temporary or permanent parts of the Creek Confederacy, and extended consideration to some of the peoples beyond with which they had intimate dealings, the tribes of Florida, and the Chickasaw, even including a brief mention of the Choctaw. This work was mainly an objective study, based upon Spanish, French, and English documents—the story of these tribes as related by the Europeans who came in contact with them.

A similar history of the same peoples from internal sources is, of course, impossible, the nearest approach to it being in the so-called origin or migration legends which contain but few facts of real historical value and must be assumed to apply only to a relatively recent period. A substitute for them must be sought in the archeological record left by the tribes as interpreted through an intensive study of the ethnology of their living representatives.

I have incorporated all of the Creek origin myths which I have been able to collect into the present paper. The rest of the space is devoted mainly to a discussion of the social and political organizations of the Creeks and their general social customs and usages.

The greater part of the present material was collected within the limits of the former Creek Nation, Okla., between September, 1911, and May, 1912, and on several shorter trips during the years immediately following. 115 In this connection I wish to render a most grateful tribute to George Washington Grayson, the most prominent and intelligent of all Creek Indians of his time, their representative in every important conference and at every crisis in their affairs, and at the time of his death chief of the nation. He was deeply interested in the history and ethnology of his people and did everything in his power to facilitate the work of all students of them. He rendered most valuable service to the late Albert S. Gatschet, and afterwards did everything in his power to assist the investigations of the writer, as well as to render his visits personally comfortable and intellectually delightful. For much of the included material Mr. Grayson is responsible, directly or indirectly, and the author wishes that it be con-

[1] [See bibliography, p. 472, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Swanton E-5 (1911-12) 1928 NNU Creek NNU

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES OF THE CREEK INDIANS

By JOHN R. SWANTON

GENERAL REMARKS

114 771 The southern Indians, like other peoples, dealt not only with their environment as it was but with their environment as they conceived it to be, and one of the most important branches of ethnology is that which concerns this latter concept. Unfortunately, at the present day comparatively little may be gathered regarding their attitude on the broader aspects of belief that is free from suspicion of white influence, while on the other hand no early traveler among the Indians was sufficiently interested in them and sufficiently sympathetic to obtain and transmit a correct account of it. The writer who most nearly filled these requirements was the trader Adair so often quoted in previous papers, but unfortunately his assistance on this particular side of aboriginal life is seriously injured by a prepossession that the Indians were descendants of "the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel," and he read this prepossession into all of the religious activities of the people observed by him. Particularly he concluded that the meaningless vocalic sounds used by his red friends in songs were so many forms of the name Jehovah and that their repetition was a conscious or subconscious adoration of the Hebrew deity. Nevertheless he was an acute and honest observer and faithful recorder of the things he actually heard and saw, so that it is usually possible to separate the facts from his deductions. With his help, the little that is furnished us by other writers, the information that I have myself been able to collect, and that obtainable from native myths and legends, the following outline of Creek religious beliefs has been put together.

THE COSMOS

772 Like all other primitive peoples, the southeastern Indians conceived of the earth as a flat plane overarched by a solid vault. To General Hitchcock Tukabahchee miko expressed the opinion that the world is square. Eakins, whose information comes principally from an Alabama Indian, says "they generally entertain the belief that the earth is a square figure, and entirely surrounded by water; and by going to the verge of the plain, they could step off."[1] And, in another

[1] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. i, p. 269.

2: Swanton E-5 (1911-12) 1928 NN11 Creek NN11

754 "Stitches in the side, or small rheumatic pains, which are frequent with them [the Creeks], are often considered as the effect of some magic wound. They firmly believe that their Indian enemies have the power of shooting them as they lie asleep, at the distance of 500 miles. They often complain of having been shot by a Choctaw or Chickasaw from the midst of these nations, and send or go directly to the most cunning and eminent doctress for relief." [34] Male doctors prescribed for witchcraft equally with women.

•114 753 Some other diseases and some different methods of treating the above are given by Doctor Speck, to whose paper (Mem. Am. Anthrop. Assn., vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 121–133) the reader is referred. Also cf. the same writer's Yuchi paper, Anthrop. Pubs. Univ. Mus., I, pp. 132–135.

753 Sickness was sometimes attributed to the absence of the soul from the body, and this was probably assigned as a principal cause of disease as well as a secondary cause. It was then the object of the doctor to induce it to come back. I have an Alabama story telling of such an occurrence. This is given by the same people as the specific cause of "slow fever." [34a]

753 177 Adair gives us in one invaluable paragraph an account of the origin and naming of a new disease. He says:

"In 1767, the Indians were struck with a disease, which they were unacquainted with before. It began with sharp pains in the head, at the lower part of each of the ears, and swelled the face and throat in a very extraordinary manner, and also the testicles. It continued about a fortnight, and in the like space of time went off gradually, without any dangerous consequence, or use of outward or inward remedies: they called it *Wahka Abeeka*, 'the cattle's distemper,' or sickness. Some of their young men had by stealth killed and eaten a few of the cattle which the traders had brought up, and they imagined they had thus polluted themselves, and were smitten in that strange manner, by having their heads, necks, etc., magnified like the same parts of a sick bull. They first concluded, either to kill all the cattle, or send them immediately off their land, to prevent the like mischief, or greater ills from befalling the beloved people—for their cunning old physicians or prophets would not undertake to cure them, in order to inflame the people to execute the former resolution; being jealous of encroachments, and afraid the cattle would spoil their open cornfields; upon which account, the traders arguments had no weight with these red Hebrew philosophers. But fortunately one of their head warriors had a few cattle soon resented to him, to keep off the wolf; and his reasoning proved so weighty, as to alter their resolution, and produce in them a contrary belief." [35]

[34] Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. v, p. 271.
[34a] See p. 666.
[35] Adair, Hist. Am. Inds., p. 132.

3:Swanton E-5 (10[illegible]-12, 1929)1931 NN11 Creek NN11

MODERN SQUARE GROUNDS OF THE CREEK INDIANS

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(With Five Plates)

The writer has already published descriptions of many of the square grounds of the Creek Indians, the sacred areas where their busks and other annual ceremonies took place.[1] In collecting this material, however, my endeavor was to learn the most ancient arrangement of the several grounds and the arrangement of those grounds no longer in use. During the summer of 1929 I visited the Creek country again to secure information regarding the organization of the extant grounds. This work duplicates and supplements the earlier to a considerable extent, but the main purpose was somewhat different.

Besides the three Yuchi grounds, now in the vicinity of Kellyville, Bixby, and Depew, respectively, with which I did not concern myself, there are, or were in 1929, 17 square grounds, as follows: Abihka and Otciapofa near Henryetta; Nuyaka north of Okemah; Łałogâlga[2] or Fish Pond and Âsilanabi west of Okemah; two Tulsa grounds near Holdenville; Tukabahchee at Yeager; Łapłâko near Wetumka; Alabama east of Alabama Station on the Frisco Railroad; Eufaula west of Eufaula; Kasihta east of Okmulgee; and Hilibi, Kealedji, Okchai, Pakan Tallahassee, and Wiogufki about Hanna. Abihka, Otciapofa, Nuyaka, Łałogâlga, Kasihta, Hilibi, Pakan Tallahassee, and Wiogufki were visited, and new information obtained regarding all of the others except Eufaula, of which I secured very good descriptions 17 years before. The Eufaula ground, that of Âsilanabi, one of the Tulsa grounds, Tukabahchee, Alabama, and Okchai were visited in the winter of 1911-1912. Kasihta is the only square ground representing the Lower Creeks now maintained. It was not in existence during my earlier work in the Creek Nation, nor were Łapłâko or Kealedji.[3] These two last and the Yuchi grounds are the only ones that I have not seen. I was present at part of the busks at Otciapofa, Nuyaka, and Pakan Tallahassee. Not much attention was devoted

[1] 42d Ann. Rep., Bur. Amer. Ethnol., 1924-25, pp. 204-296, 1928.

[2] In the present paper, â indicates the obscure a in such a word as ability, and ł or Ł is a surd l approximating thl in English.

[3] But see p. 35 regarding the former.

3:Swanton E-5 (1911-12, 1929)1931 NNIl Creek NNIl

114 344 to the Seminole grounds, but information was obtained regarding one of these, Ochesee Seminole, which had been discontinued in 1912, when I visited the Seminole squares, but was afterwards revived.

000 In order to make the material obtained in 1929 intelligible, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of the Creek political, social, and ceremonial organization.

101 The name Creek is a shortened form of Ochesee Creek Indians, a name which English traders from South Carolina came to apply to that part of the Indians of the Creek Confederation who were living upon Ocmulgee River in the closing decades of the seventeenth century and the opening years of the eighteenth. The word Ochesee signifies "people of a different speech" in the language of the Hitchiti, one of the minor constituents of the Creek Confederacy, being equivalent to the word Tciloki in the Creek or Muskogee language. It was applied to the Creeks proper or Muskogee by the Hitchiti along with many other tribes, but came in some way to be particularly associated with the Muskogee and the river upon which they were then living.

101 619 Anciently there seems not to have been a single term applicable to all of the Muskogee, the latter name having been unknown to the Spaniards who first entered this section. It does not make its appearance until the English had settled in the Carolinas. The origin of the word is uncertain, but there are indications that it was derived from Shawnee, since a band of Shawnee lived for a time near what is now Augusta, Ga., and from a very early period occupied an intermediate position between South Carolina and Georgia on the one hand and the Creek Nation on the other. It is probable that there were originally several tribes speaking the same language but having separate names and that the necessity for a distinguishing term for all did not present itself until the number of non-Muskogee tribes in the Confederation came to be considerable. As to the names of these Muskogee tribes, we seem to have indications of the following: Abihka, Coosa, Okchai, Pakana, Tukabahchee, Hilibi, Eufaula, Kasihta and Coweta (or perhaps an original tribe of which the Kasihta and Coweta were sections). There were some other groups on the lower course of Tallapoosa River, such as the Atasi, Kealedji, and Kolomi, which cannot be definitely placed and may have been independent of these or early subdivisions of them. Of course some may represent people of wholly different connections who had become assimilated to the Muskogee and had lost their own language and customs. This is rendered probable from the fact that we have